(a) whether India would join Paris Convention on Intellectual Property Rights; and

(b) the advantage, India will get from the convention?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Opening of Commercial offices in Pakistan

3552. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of commercial offices opened by the Government in Pakistan for promoting greater trade with that country;

(b) the number of personnel in these offices and their professional background; and

(c) whether there is any impediment placed by the Pakistan authorities in the smooth operation of these commercial offices?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No separate commercial office has been opened by the Government of India in Pakistan. However, a Commercial Wing exists in the High Commission of India, Islamabad. This is headed by a Counsellor with consideration commercial experience in other Indian Missions earlier. He is assisted by a PA, assistant and LDC.

(c) The major impediment in the smooth functioning of the Commercial Wing is the reluctance of the Pakistani authorities to interact with the Commercial Wing and harassment by the Pakistani Intelligence agencies of the businessmen getting in touch with the Commercial Wing.

Projections by STC

3553. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Trading Corporation's projections for the current year has sharply come down;

(b) the total loss incurred by STC on fake import and export deals in the recent past years;

(c) the reasons therefore; and

(d) the remedial steps in details taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. During the current financial year, the total turnover of the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. has been projected at the level of Rs. 3300 crores as compared to the achieved turnover of Rs. 2878 crores during 1997-98 which envisages an increases by 15%.

(b) The Corporation has intimated that it has not entered into any fake import and export deals. It has been earning net profits every year since its inception.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Export of Agricultural Products

3554. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost export of certain agriculture products and farm goods;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) the target set up for exports of agriculture products this year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The policy of the government to permit exports of agricultural products and farm goods is governed principally by the